

CERCOSPORA LEAF SPOT OF THE CHINESE TALLOW TREE

S. A. Alfieri, Jr.

Sapium sebiferum (L.) Roxb., commonly known as the Chinese tallow tree and vegetable tallow, is native to China and occurs throughout the tropics (2,4). Its range in the United States includes Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, the Gulf states from Louisiana to Florida, and along the South Atlantic coast to South Carolina (5). The name is derived from *Sapo*, the Latin word for soap, and *sebiferum* meaning "producing wax" (2). This species grows up to 30 ft (9 meters) in height, with leaves turning deep red in winter, and is one of approximately 100 species. Some of the species are utilized for a number of important products, e.g., *S. jenmanii* Hemsl., provides the chief source of rubber in British Guiana. *S. verum* Hemsl. formerly served the same purpose in Colombia but is now rare (1). *S. sebiferum* is cultivated in China especially for its wax which is used for candles, soap, and cloth-dressing (1). This wax was formerly imported into the United States, but mineral waxes have taken its place (3). Additionally, the tree protects stream banks by its root suckers and its quick growth, its leaves furnish a black dye, and oil may be extracted from the seeds (2). In Florida, it is grown as an ornamental tree. Some "jumping beans" are seeds of *Sapium* which contain insect larvae (1).

Of the relatively few diseases (4) that affect the Chinese tallow tree, *Cercospora stillingiae* Ell. & Ev. is known to cause a leaf spot. (3).

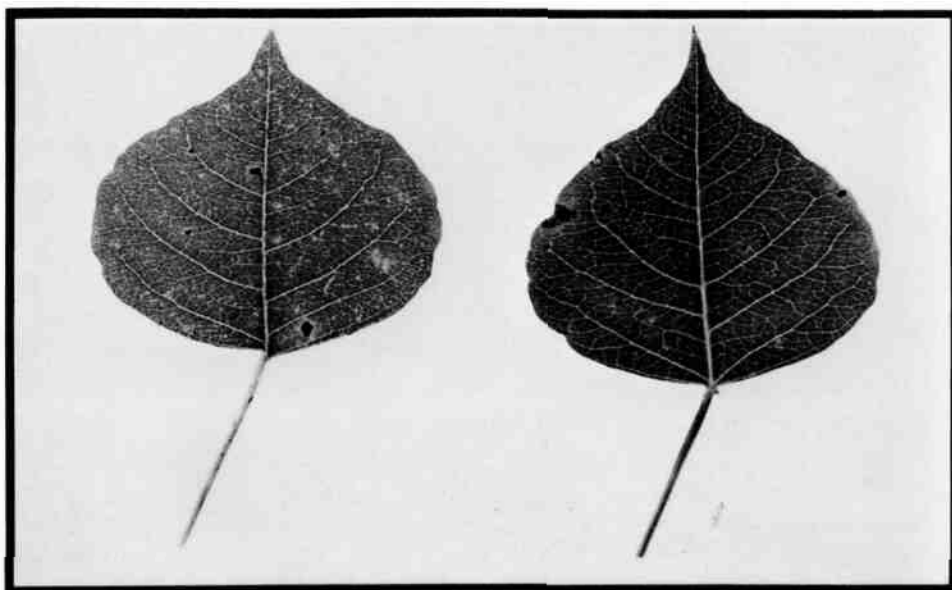


Fig. 1. Leaf spot of the Chinese tallow tree, *Sapium sebiferum*, caused by *Cercospora stillingiae*. (DPI Photo No. 702327-16)

SYMPTOMS. This leaf spot is characterized by subcircular to angular brown lesions with a dark brown, narrow margin and a diffuse yellow halo (Fig. 1). Spots are relatively few in number and range from 2 to 5 mm in diameter. They occur more frequently on older leaves late in the summer or fall season of the year. The amount of leaf-spotting does not appear to affect this tree seriously, hence chemical control of this disease does not seem warranted.

SURVEY AND DETECTION. Leaf spots of the disease are found on older leaves in the later summer or fall season and occur as small (2-5 mm), brown spots, up to six or so in number per leaf.

LITERATURE CITED

1. Bailey, L. H. 1961. The standard cyclopedia of horticulture. Vol. III. MacMillan Co., New York. 1216p.
2. Barrett, Mary F. 1956. Common exotic trees of South Florida. University of Florida Press, Gainesville, FL. 414p.
3. Chupp, C. 1953. A monograph of the genus *Cercospora*. Ithaca, N. Y. 667p.
4. U. S. Department of Agriculture. 1960. Index of plant diseases in the United States. Agric. Handbook No. 165. U. S. Govt. Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 531p.
5. Vines, R. A. 1960. Trees, shrubs and woody vines of the southwest. University of Texas Press, Austin. 1104p.